

6th District Updates



Fearey's First Edition

The City Council has been taking, I think, an undeserved beating lately with regards to School Resource Officers (SRO's). I feel that I owe it to the citizens of the 6th District to explain the reasoning behind my vote on this issue. Like many of you, I believe that the SRO program is an excellent one that helps both the staff and the students in all of our public middle and high schools.

What many citizens may not realize is that the City of Wichita has increased in area by more than 27% since 1990. With that growth has come the need for new police beats to provide adequate police coverage throughout all of Wichita. Despite the City's growth, the City budget has seen the elimination of dollars flowing back to it from the state, and the federal grant that had funded the SRO's expired.

For these reasons, the funding for 9 of the 21 SRO's was cut, but only after much discussion by council members and with USD 259 BOE members and the Superintendent. This cut still leaves an SRO in every USD 259 public high school and in 5 of our middle schools. USD 259 staff chose the middle schools in which to leave the SRO's. The city is still funding 100% of these remaining positions at a cost of approximately \$600,000.

On the day the City Council voted on the final budget, Superintendent Brooks came before us offering to fund half of the expenses for officers to staff the remaining USD 259 middle schools. Unfortunately, this was a well-meaning offer made too late. We had already acted on an earlier response from Mr. Brooks. That response came in a July 16 email from Mr. Brooks in response to questions raised in *The Wichita Eagle* by a council member. One question asked was, "Can the district help fund the officers?"

Mr. Brooks responded by saying, "I guess my first question back to you, is why should we? Are other citizens asked to help pay for police protection? Why would the City ask school children, teachers, principals, and parents to pay for police protection? Also, as you know the School Board is also in the process of cutting nearly \$10m from its budget. Included in our cuts is a 5% cut to our Safety and Security Department. To ask the Board to cut it's own funding and then turn around and pay for City Cops doesn't seem logical to me. This question has been raised by the Manager to me on several occasions and by Chief Williams. The answer is no."

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Wild Animals in Your Neighborhood	2	Based on the Superintendent's response that the school district would not assist with the funding of the SROs, the Police Department proceeded to establish new police beats and realign all other police beats to provide the much-needed citywide coverage. This process immediately reassigned the former SROs back to regular police beats in the new beat configuration.
Citizens Academy	2	Establishing these new beats had been worked on for many months with the full knowledge of the Council. I had the opportunity to have input to the realignment of the beats that affect the 6 th District and was anxious for this to occur since I feel many of our neighborhoods are better served with the new beats. Because of these new police beats, there are no former SRO's physically available for assignment in the 5 middle schools presently without them. The next class of new police officers won't be "street ready" until September of 2004. Unless the city can hire from outside, there are no officers to fill SRO positions, even if the funding was available.
Old Ideas make a new pond	2	
Main Street Improvements	3	
Fall Yard cleanup	3	
Bridgeport Adult Soccer Project	4	Because I believe the SRO program is important, I did put forth the motion that two council members work with USD 259 BOE members and staff from both organizations to try to find funding and available personnel in order to put SRO's back into all of our Wichita public schools. It is my hope that by the time you read this, that task force will be meeting and will be on its way to finding some means of doing this.
Historic Midtown Neighborhood Plan	4	

Continued on Page 4

Old Idea Makes a New Pond

The relocated duck pond and the new 'lake' at Riverside Park were completed and filled with water The week of August 4th.

Restoration and repairs are underway to the ponds at Park Villa and Oak Park. The artificial stream, which feeds the Oak Park pond, is also being rebuilt. Overflow from the pond will feed a new 'wetlands' area east of the pond. The wetlands were part of L.W. Clapp's original mid-1920's plan for Oak Park, but the loamy soil was not compatible with this type of feature.

Thanks to more recent construction technology, namely, adding a clay liner in this low area, the original plan will finally be realized.

"Natural gas prices are expected to continue to increase due to market conditions"



Wild Animals in Your Neighborhood or Yard



The question of what to do about wild animals roaming through neighborhoods and yards has come up several times lately. Animals such as raccoons and opossums are part of the normal urban wildlife. The city does not respond to these types of animals unless they represent a public health or safety risk. If a citizen wants this type of wildlife removed from their property, they should contact a licensed

animal specialist registered with the Department of Wildlife. The city does provide skunk traps, due to the rabies risk and disposes of the animals trapped. The city also picks up dead animals (about 6,000-7,000 a year). They also pick up all kinds of ill or suspicious animals for quarantine and testing through the K-State Veterinary School. About 650 animals a year are tested for rabies. The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks suggests that wildlife the does not appear to be rabies suspects should be left alone.

The City of Wichita Introduces **Citizens Academy** A Leadership Program for the Citizens of Wichita



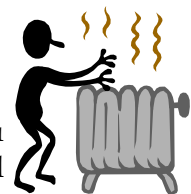
Do you wonder how all of the outstanding things in the City of Wichita are accomplished? Paving streets; water distribution and how decisions that affect the citizens of Wichita are made. Well now you can find the answer to all these questions and more!

Citizens Academy is a program that educates participants about City functions and operations in hopes of developing citizen leaders. **Citizens Academy** provides informative presentations on various City departments as well as interesting tours of City facilities.

The City of Wichita needs people who want to take an active role in local government. Learn how you can help Wichita continue to be a great place to live, work and play! To apply, call **268-4331**.

Natural Gas Price Increase Expected

Natural gas prices are expected to continue to increase due to market conditions and a pending rate increase from Kansas Gas Service. This could, and probably will, have a large impact on your home gas bill this winter. Now is the time to start thinking about things you can do to weatherize and help keep the lid on high bills. Look for places through which cold air can enter your house and caulk or weather-strip those areas. Think about getting more insulation in your attic. Air infiltration around windows can be controlled with custom made storm windows, by installing the packaged plastic window coverings sold in home stores, or by snugly attaching plastic to your windows with tape. Remember that anything you can do to help stop cold air from coming in and warm air from leaving your house will help save your money and the world's natural resources.



Main Street Improvement, Douglas to Murdock

In November 1956, the Traffic Commission recommended that Main Street be converted to one-way southbound traffic. This was done in conjunction with other streets in the downtown area to facilitate and provide ease of circulation and additional capacity on the current streets. In February 1957, the then City Commission approved Main Street to be made one-way southbound from 13th to Pawnee and Park Place be made one-way southbound from 24th to 13th. The conversions were completed in April 1958.

Downtown Development Plans have since identified Main Street as a “gateway to the core area” and to the governmental center and recommended that it be converted to two-way traffic. The project to convert Main Street from Douglas to Kellogg from one-way to two-way was completed in the mid 1990’s. To complete the conversion, the Capital Improvement Program included a project to convert the next portion of Main Street from one-way traffic to two-way from Douglas to Murdock. On November 5, 2002, the City Council voted 5 – 2 (Fearey and Brewer no) to not fund the conversion.

On December 10, 2002, the City Council approved the construction of the two adult soccer fields in the Bridgeport area and recommended funds be used from the Main Street project. On February 4, 2003, the City Council transferred \$450,000 to Riverside Park improvements in order to fund the Phase I work on the park. The funds remaining in the Main Street Improvement project were to be used to rehabilitate Main from Douglas to Murdock leaving it one-way.

On July 15, 2003, the City Council deferred action on the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Main Street in order to reconsider whether or not it wished to revert to the original plan to convert Main Street to two-way traffic. The motion that day was to “approve the rehabilitation of Main Street from Douglas to Murdock, program in the new Capital Improvement Program for Phase II work that would include the signal system, etc. for converting the street to two way.” Following council discussion the motion was approved with the stipulation that the conversion be several years away in the CIP.



HELP: Lost Pet

Environmental Health's Animal Control program and Information Technology/Information Systems office have developed and implemented a new feature that is now available on the City of Wichita website. Citizens with internet access may see a daily listing of all the animals brought into the shelter. Pet owners who are looking for a lost or missing pet can now use the feature to locate missing animals. The information provided on the site are date of pickup, shelter tag number, breed, sex, color, location or address picked up and other information. This listing offers another tool to citizens to determine if their animal is at the shelter and to obtain real time information about animals housed at the shelter. The shelter receives many calls daily from people making inquiries about lost or missing pet, if they have internet access, they can now have the information faster and more efficiently.

Fall Yard Cleanup

As you look ahead to clean up all the leaves that are in your yard this fall, think about **composting**. Putting leaves in the trash is an expensive way to dispose of them. Instead try doing one of the following: **Mulch mow** the leaves into the grass. K-State Research and Extension has shown that up to 3” of leaves at a time can be mulch mowed back into the lawn without affecting the quality of the turf. An easy way to do this is to rake the large piles of leaves that are under your trees evenly across your yard and then go over them with the mower. If you don’t have a mulch mower, mow over the leaves while catching them in the mower bag. Then add the chopped leaves to a compost pile or spread a 3”-4” layer around trees and shrubs for mulch. The chopped leaves spread at the base of plants helps hold the soil moisture in while providing essential nutrients to the plants.



Finally, remember not to rake or blow your leaves or grass clippings into the street gutter where they can be washed down to the storm sewer. The debris can clog the storm sewer inlets or end up in the river where they become a source of pollution.

Come See the City's Newest Fire Station!



3162 W. 42nd Street North
Vice Mayor Sharon Fearey and Fire Chief Larry Garcia cut the ribbon, Saturday, August 9, at 9 a.m. to dedicate the opening of Wichita's newest fire stations, Station #13. The ribbon cutting ceremony was followed by an open house. Here are some facts about the new fire station:

- Location: 3162 W. 42nd Street North, District VI
- Construction Cost: \$1,116,464; Contractor: Caro Construction
- Facility Size: 7,509 square feet; two-bay station
- First Day of Operation: June 9, 2003.

WICHITA BURN BAN LIFTED

Wichita has been under a BURN BAN since August 22, 2003. Due to the recent rains, and lower temperatures, the Fire Marshal is lifting the BAN.

The Wichita Fire Department wishes to emphasize to the public the need to be aware of ignition sources that could present a fire danger such as careless use of open flame devices, discarded smoking materials and unattended BBQ grills. Please be careful!

For additional information please contact Fire Marshal Ed Bricknell at 268-4466.

**Remember, Fire Prevention is everyone's business.
Please make it yours.**

EVERGREEN NEIGHBORHOOD CITY HALL

2700 N. WOODLAND STE..D
WICHITA, KS 67204
316-303-8042
316-303-8049 FAX



CUSTOMER SERVICE
ABOVE AND BEYOND

Fearey's First Edition continued from Page 1

There have been other issues such as cell phone usage, contracts, staff travel and technical violations of open meetings laws that have beleaguered the Council. Room does not allow me to address each of these in this edition. I would just close by saying that I do not believe your City Council votes on issues without having facts available, without having studied issues in detail, and without always having what they believe is the best interest of the citizens of Wichita at heart. Although people may disagree with the decisions made, I promise that none of those decisions are made lightly or at the last minute. We appreciate each of you and welcome your comments and suggestions anytime.

Council Member Sharon Fearey

BRIDGEPORT ADULT SOCCER FIELD PROJECT

On December 10, 2002, the City Council designated a site on the east side of Ohio Street, south of 37th Street North, as the location for a new adult soccer facility. This was done with the input of the Hispanic Soccer league. The league had been looking for a facility that would have adult sized fields, be near many of their player's residences, and be safe for their players. To date, two fields have been built and an irrigation system has been installed at the new site. On August 5, 2003, the City Council approved providing \$300,000 for parking improvements that will provide approximately 170 paved spaces. The funding came from General Obligation Bonds available by transfer of funds from savings that were realized by keeping Main Street designated as one-way. The original Main Street Improvement project had called for converting the street to two-way between Douglas and Murdock.



Historic Midtown Neighborhood Plan

Historic Midtown, bounded by Murdock on the South, 18th on the North, the Santa Fe RR tracks on the East and the river on the West, is currently developing a neighborhood plan. They hope to have this plan approved by the Metropolitan Area Planning Commission and the City Council. It would then become part of the official Comprehensive Plan and would be a guideline for future development and the expenditure of City of Wichita Capital Improvement Program funds. **Soon** you will learn more about this program, by clicking on: www.wichita.gov District VI Neighborhood Plans.